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SUBJECT: TURKISH AMBASSADOR DISCUSSES U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS

Classified By: POLITICAL OFFICER OSMAN N. TAT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

1. (S) During Embassy,s Dakar Fourth of July celebrations, PolOff had a candid discussion with Turkish Ambassador Yalcin Kayaerensoy (strictly protect) on the Turkish people,s continued anger over the capture of its soldiers in July 2003, Turkey,s upcoming July 22 election, the rise of nationalism and the United States, unwillingness to assist with the fight against the PKK. END SUMMARY.

2. (S) Underlining that Turkey had been an ally of the United States since 1952, Ambassador Kayaerensoy stated that the shockwaves and resentment from the July 2003 capture of 11 Turkish military personnel in Northern Iraq and their subsequent mistreatment were still reverberating around the country. He went on to say that even within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this event is still a major source of anger towards the United States: &We have stayed quiet up until now and tried not to reflect our anger to the outside world, but the way our soldiers were treated remains unacceptable.8 He added that Americans still do not understand that Turkey,s soldiers are considered sacrosanct by the Turkish people and that an attack on them is an attack on the country as a whole. When asked whether or not this would lead to a reassessment of Turkey,s relations with the United States, the Ambassador demurred. However, he added that the shock of the &abductions8 was doubled due to the fact that the United States, Turkey,s long standing ally, had been the perpetrator. The Ambassador did not buy into the argument that this was a case of mistaken identity.

THE RISE OF NATIONALISM AND NEW MARKETS

3. (S) Directly following the previous comments, Ambassador Kayaerensoy maintained that the European Union,s treatment of Turkey as well as the United States, unwillingness to deal with the PKK is leading to a marked rise in nationalism within Turkey. He feels that this nationalism will be reflected by the entry into parliament of the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) following the July 22 elections. On French President Sarkozy and the EU, he said: &At least Sarkozy is honest and expresses what all the other European leaders are afraid to say.8 He went on to opine that the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) was doing whatever the Americans and the Europeans wanted in order to further personal agendas: &Come on, what have they really done since they have been in power? They keep falling over themselves trying to enter the European Union. How much more rejection can a nation endure?8

¶4. (S) Highlighting that Turkey has been party to every major European treaty since the founding of NATO, he rhetorically asked &what does it actually mean to be European anyway, and why are we being rejected when we have met every obligation that was forced upon us? And don,t forget that from the 1600,s onwards the Ottoman Empire expanded westwards and not towards the Middle East. We have been an integral part of the European continent for centuries.8 As a result of the distinct rise in tensions between Turkey and its traditional allies and partners, he mused that Turkey must now look for new markets and allies and included Iran on list of potential countries. Ambassador Kayaernsoy also warned that many in Turkey, where, he wistfully pointed out, the United States remains less popular than in many Arab nations, are under the impression that the United States, unwillingness to assist Turkey in its fight against the PKK is not only hypocritical but extremely dangerous: &You went into Iraq claiming to fight a war against terror, and yet you do not help us to fight the PKK who has been responsible for the death of over 30,000 people.8

ELECTIONS -- A PREDICTION

¶5. (C) Ambassador Kayaerensoy thinks that only three parties have a chance of passing the 10 percent barrage to take their place in the next parliament. The AKP will once again come out as winners although he envisages a reduced majority to around the 300 seat range. The Republican People,s Party (CHP) will come in second, and the MHP will come in third. Additionally, he expects that 30 or so independent candidates, mainly from Turkey,s predominantly Kurdish Southeastern region, will enter the parliament. Under this scenario he has no idea what kind of government will emerge

DAKAR 00001435 002 OF 002

but expects that some sort of coalition is inevitable. He does not think that Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul will become President as the AKP will not have enough votes to elect him.

¶6. (C) BIO NOTE: Ambassador Kayaerensoy has been in Dakar close to five years, and he expects to return to an as yet unknown job in Ankara after the elections. END BIO NOTE.

¶7. (U) Visit Embassy Dakar,s SIPRNET Web site at <http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/af/dakar>.
JACOBS